

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 16 are pending in the application.

Election of Group B without Traverse

The outstanding Office Action notes that Claims 1, 2 and 8 through 16 are generic.

The Office Action goes on to restrict the remaining claims into three groups:

Group A, i.e. Claims 3 and 4, drawn to advantageous embodiments in which the natural polymer is a polysaccharide and the hydrophilic component is a natural and/or synthetic polymer (Claim 3) and the natural polymer is a polysaccharide (Claim 4).

Group B, i.e. Claims 5 and 6, drawn to advantageous embodiments in which the hydrophilic component is a water-soluble synthetic polymer (Claim 5) and the water-soluble synthetic polymer is a polyvinyl alcohol, a vinylpyrrolidone (co)polymer, a polyalkylene glycol, a (co)polymer containing units of N-vinylalkylamides, or a (co)polymer containing units of (meth)acrylic acid or (meth)acrylamide (Claim 6) and

Group C, i.e. Claim 7, drawn to advantageous embodiments in which the hydrophilic component is a polyether amide, polyester amide, polyether ester amide or polyamido urethane.

Applicants initially respectfully submits that Claim 3 does not recite “polysaccharide.” In an effort to emphasize its generic nature, Applicant is prepared to amend Claim 3 to delete the phrase “is a natural and/or synthetic polymer.” Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reclassification of Claim 3 as a generic claim upon submission of the foregoing proposed amendment. Should the Examiner deem it necessary, however, Applicant is prepared in the alternative for the Examiner’s withdrawal of Claim 3.

Applicants further hereby elect without traverse the claims of Group B, i.e. Claims 5 and 6.

Accordingly, Applicants anticipate the Examiner's withdrawal of Claims 4 and 7. Applicant respectfully requests in advance the rejoinder of Claims 4 and 7 upon allowance of a generic claim; however.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that Applicants have made a significant and important contribution to the art, which is neither disclosed nor suggested in the art. It is believed that all of pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance. It is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned if any questions remain to expedite examination of this application.

It is not believed that fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional fees are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, the fees are hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2193.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office via the Office electronic filing system in accordance with 37 CFR §1.6(a)(4) on January 16, 2009.

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